

"Under Wasatch Skies" pp 74-75

CHAPTER VIII

COMMUNITY SERVICE AND RECREATION

Among the many aspects of frontier life there were those which served to take the hard edge from pioneering. Early doctors and midwives brought comfort to the sick. Music and drama were uplifting factors; and dancing, games, and festive occasions brought recreation to those whose life otherwise was a steady program of work in the homes and fields.

DOCTORS AND MIDWIVES

All early accounts of life in Provo Valley which mention Robert McKnight pay grateful respect to this kindly Scotch herb doctor. Uncle Robert, as he was known, the son of Michael and Lizzie McKnight, was born in Glasgow, Scotland, January 1, 1803. As a youth he was converted to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by the first missionaries to Scotland.¹ His father turned him out of his home because of his new faith, but he was befriended by a Scotch botanist, in whose home he learned much concerning plants and medicinal herbs. He married and came to America in the general immigration of Mormon converts. His arrival in Heber in 1864 was a very welcome one, and he served as the only doctor there for many years. He displayed an untiring devotion to the people of the valley, often walking many miles under adverse conditions to be of service to the sick.

The pioneer midwives also rendered medical service of many types in addition to delivering children. Women such as Ann Giles, Ellen Clegg, Esther Wagstaff, Hannah

¹Emma Wherritt, "Doctors of Wasatch County," MSS, (Daughters of Utah Pioneers Historical Collection, Heber City, 1952), p. 1.



Robert
McKnight
Herb Doctor



Ellen
Clegg



Esther
Wagstaff



Hanah
Nicols



Cordelia
Wilson



Christina
Lindsay



Margaret
Watkins



Polly Derby
Mecham



Julia Ann
Cook



Rosella
Ann Mecham

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Nichols, Christina Lindsay, Cordelia Wilson, Margaret Brack, Polly D. Mecham, Rosella Ann Mecham and Julia Ann Mecham could often be found driving a horse and buggy to the home of someone with pneumonia or typhoid. The close of the era saw the arrival of licensed physicians such as Dr. D. Moore Lindsay, Dr. Mary Green, Dr. J. W. Aird, Dr. W. R. Wherritt, Dr. E. J. Morton, Dr. H. R. Hatch and Dr. T. A. Dannenberg. Bert A. Dannenberg would later be chiefly responsible for the creation of the county hospital in 1925. Early dentists were Dr. Westphal, Dr. Wm. Sessions, Dr. D. B. Witt and Dr. H. R. Read.

THE NEWSPAPER

A week of almost desperate effort in the square frame building just west of Main on Center Street preceded the publication of the first *Wasatch Wave*. William H. Buys, then editor and manager of the new four-page county newspaper, feverishly set the new hand type which had arrived late from Salt Lake City and finished just in time to bring out *The Wave* on March 23, 1889. The first *Wave*, which Mr. Buys asserted was "but a tiny ripple on the great ocean of journalism" carried the most important news of the hour—its own publication. Printed in eight-point, Cheltenham, light face type, the paper was offered to subscribers for two dollars and fifty cents per year. Avowedly, the paper was to remain independent of party, sect, or creed while devoting itself to general news, farming, mining, science, history, and general literature.

The advertisements of the day included the offer of a local dentist to painlessly extract teeth through the use of vitalized air. A saloon, in addition to choice wines, liquors, and cigars, offered to sell readers pure alcohol for medicinal purposes. The city bakery was selling meat pies at five and ten cents, and at one tailor shop suits would be made to order from eight dollars and up.

The image shows the front page of the first issue of the *Wasatch Wave* newspaper. The masthead at the top center reads "THE WASATCH WAVE" in large, bold letters. Below the masthead, the date "March 23, 1889" is printed. The page is densely packed with text, including a large article on the left side and several smaller advertisements and notices on the right side. The text is arranged in multiple columns, typical of a newspaper layout from that era. The overall appearance is that of a historical document, with some wear and tear visible on the paper.

Front page of first Wasatch Wave